



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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For immediate release

Oct. 23, 2007

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DEQ monitors indicate attainment of the EPA fine particle standard

BATON ROUGE – Statewide monitors for PM 2.5, also known as fine particles, show that twelve parishes are in attainment for the Environmental Protection Agency's revised 24-hour fine particle standards. In a letter dated Oct. 12 to EPA Region 6 Administrator Richard Greene, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality recommended these twelve parishes be designated in attainment. DEQ further recommended that the remaining 52 parishes be unclassified. The parishes recommended to be classified in attainment are: Caddo, Calcasieu, Concordia, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafayette, Ouachita, Rapides, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne and West Baton Rouge.

EPA revised the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for PM 2.5 in December 2006 based on health studies showing there can be serious health effects with even short term exposure to PM 2.5. Fine particulate matter is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets and can be emitted directly or formed secondarily in the atmosphere. These particles come from both natural and manmade sources such as diesel engines, wood burning activities and other industrial and commercial combustion activities.

EPA required the states to submit their recommendations, in accordance with the Clean Air Act, by Dec. 18, 2007. Louisiana was required to base their recommendations on emission and air quality data, population density and urbanization, traffic and commuting patterns and other factors. EPA will review the recommendations and should complete final designations by December 2008.

“The fact that our statewide monitors show these twelve parishes are in attainment is a good indication that the state is in attainment of the revised lower standard,” said Chris Roberie, DEQ air administrator. “The PM 2.5 monitors are located in areas of the state where DEQ would expect to see the highest concentration of fine particles.”

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